

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199227

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY

1. TEXT OF A CONTRIBUTION TO AN ALLIED POSITION PAPER ON
PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY FOLLOWS, MISSION IS REQUESTED TO
RUN OFF COPIES AND HAVE THEM AVAILABLE FOR DISTRIBUTION
TO AD HOC GROUP WHICH BEGINS SESSION ON OCTOBER 9. BEGIN
TEXT:

I. ALLIED OBJECTIVE

TO WORK OUT AN ADEQUATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY ON
CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL ASSIST THE ALLIES IN
OBTAINING SUPPORT FOR THE ALLIED POSITION IN THE NEGOTIAT-
IONS WHILE MAINTAINING A REASONABLE DEGREE OF CONFIDENT-
IALITY OF THE NEGOTIATIONS AND A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP

WITH THE EASTERN DELEGATIONS.

II. POINTS FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS EMPHASIS

(A) OPENING STATEMENTS

AT THE OUTSET OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE PRESS INTEREST, WHICH IS LIKELY TO BE HIGH THROUGH BACKGROUNDING. WE SHOULD SEEK EASTERN AGREEMENT FOR PRESS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS TO ENTER THE CONFERENCE ROOM BRIEFLY IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE OPENING SESSION. THE SESSIONS AT WHICH OPENING STATEMENTS ARE GIVEN SHOULD NOT BE OPEN TO THE PRESS, BUT IT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH THE EAST WHETHER PARTICIPANTS WILL BE FREE TO MAKE THEIR OPENING STATEMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS. IN ADDITION, THE AD HOC GROUP MIGHT ASK AN ALLIED SPOKESMAN, E.G. ITS CHAIRMAN, TO HIGHLIGHT VARIOUS THEMES FROM THE WESTERN OPENING STATEMENTS IN A SPECIAL PRESS CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF OPENING STATEMENTS HAD BEEN COMPLETED AFTER CONSULTATION IN AND APPROVAL OF THESE THEMES BY THE GROUP.

(B) DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN THEMES

THE ALLIES COULD SEEK AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THE EAST ON A GENERAL RULE OF CONFIDENTIALITY FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOWING PRESENTATION OF OPENING STATEMENTS. THIS RULE SHOULD APPLY ONLY TO THE DETAILS OF SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OR COUNTER PROPOSALS UNDER ACTIVE DISCUSSION AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED TO PREVENT BACKGROUNDING OUR GENERAL POINTS OF VIEW AND GENERAL CONCEPTS.

THE ALLIES MIGHT CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STEPS DURING THE PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN THEMES:

-- THE AD HOC GROUP MIGHT ASK AN ALLIED SPOKESMAN, E.G. ITS CHAIRMAN, OR ITS PRESS SPOKESMAN, TO DEVELOP THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAIN WESTERN THEME OR THEMES CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED IN THE PRESENTATIONS IN BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS WITH THE WESTERN PRESS;

-- NATIONAL DELEGATIONS MIGHT ALSO WISH TO TAKE NOTE OF WESTERN THEMES CURRENTLY BEING DEVELOPED IN CONTACTS WITH MEMBERS OF THEIR NATIONAL PRESS.

-- NATIONAL AUTHORITIES MIGHT DESCRIBE THEIR POINTS OF VIEW AS THEY RELATE TO THE GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER OF MBFR IN CONTACTS WITH THEIR NATIONAL PRESS IN CAPITALS.

(C) REST OF THE INITIAL STAGE

AFTER THE PRESENTATION OF THE ALLIED FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL, THE ALLIES SHOULD ALSO DO SOME BACKGROUNDING OF THIS SUBJECT.

III. RATIONALE FOR THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) PUBLIC INTEREST

A SUBJECT AS IMPORTANT AS MBFR WILL AROUSE CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC INTEREST. THROUGHOUT THE TALKS, IT WOULD BE TO NATO'S ADVANTAGE TO ENSURE THAT WESTERN GENERAL OBJECTIVES ARE ACCURATELY PRESENTED IN NEWS MEDIA AND THAT MAJOR DISTORTIONS OF WESTERN POSITIONS IN THE MEDIA WHICH RESULT FROM EASTERN INITIATIVE CAN BE CORRECTED IF IT IS DECIDED THIS IS DESIRABLE. PUBLIC INTEREST MAY PRESENT THE ALLIES WITH SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR GAINING TACTICAL ADVANTAGES.

(B) PUBLIC SUPPORT

ACHIEVEMENT OF WESTERN NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES, CONTROL OF THE MBFR PROCESS, AND THE VIABILITY OF EVENTUAL MBFR AGREEMENTS WILL ALL DEPEND TO AN IMPORTANT DEGREE ON PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL WESTERN APPROACH IN MBFR AND, IN PARTICULAR CASES, FOR WESTERN POSITIONS. CAREFUL AND CORDIAL ATTENTION TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESS BY WESTERN SPOKESMEN CAN HELP BUILD AND MAINTAIN THIS SUPPORT.

(C) AVOIDANCE OF UNDUE PUBLIC PRESSURE

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ALLIES WILL WISH TO PREVENT, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, UNDUE PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE DAY-TO-DAY CONDUCT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, ALLIED PARTICIPANTS WILL NOT WISH TO FIND THEMSELVES IN A SITUATION WHERE IT IS DIFFICULT TO MODIFY THEIR POSITIONS BECAUSE THESE HAVE ALREADY BEEN PUBLICLY DISCUSSED IN DETAIL.

(D) AVOIDANCE OF A PROPAGANDA COMPETITION WITH THE EAST.

THE ALLIES SHOULD TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO AVOID ENGAGING IN AN UNPRODUCTIVE PROPAGANDA BATTLE WITH THE EAST. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY WILL WISH TO BE ABLE TO CORRECT MAJOR DISTORTIONS OF WESTERN POSITIONS WHICH APPEAR IN THE PRESS AT WARSAW PACT INITIATIVE, ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.

(E) SUMMARY

THE AIM IS A BALANCED APPROACH: TO MAINTAIN THE NECESSARY CONFIDENTIALITY FOR THE TALKS, TO MAINTAIN A CLIMATE OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE EAST PERMITTING SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, AND TO SEEK SYMPATHETIC HANDLING BY THE PRESS.

IV. ALLIED CONTACTS WITH THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES ON PRESS AND PUBLICITY

(A) WESTERN INITIATIVES

EARLY IN THE INITIAL STAGE, WESTERN REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS TO EASTERN PARTICIPANTS:

(I) IT IS DESIRABLE TO REACH SOME UNDERSTANDING ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PUBLICITY AND PRESS TREATMENT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS. UNLESS THERE IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF SOME KIND ON THIS SUBJECT, INDEPENDENT ACTIONS MAY COMPLICATE EFFORTS TO REACH AGREEMENT.

(II) IN ORDER TO MAKE THE NEGOTIATIONS BUSINESSLIKE AND MEANINGFUL, THE WESTERN COUNTRIES WOULD LIKE TO PRESERVE THEIR CONFIDENTIALITY WHILE THEY ARE IN PROGRESS. THEY MAY, HOWEVER, WISH TO BE ABLE TO PUBLICIZE ALL OR PARTS OF THEIR OPENING STATEMENTS AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, TO ENGAGE IN SOME PRESS BRIEFINGS ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER. THE CONFIDENTIALITY RULE SHOULD APPLY TO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OR COUNTER PROPOSALS UNDER DISCUSSION. WE WOULD INTEND ON A CONTINUING BASIS TO DO SOME BACKGROUNDING ON OUR GENERAL POINTS OF VIEW AND GENERAL CONCEPTS.

(III) WE WISH TO AVOID A SITUATION OF COMPETING PUBLICITY AND PRESS CLAIMS WHICH COULD BE DAMAGING TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

(B) DISCUSSION WITH THE OTHER SIDE ON PUBLIC AFFAIRS POLICY.

EASTERN REPRESENTATIVES MAY EXPRESS SKEPTICISM AS TO THE FEASIBILITY OF THE WESTERN SUGGESTION IN LIGHT OF PAST EXPERIENCE WITH WESTERN PRESS LEAKS. THE ALLIED REPRESENTATIVES COULD ADMIT THE DIFFICULTY OF THE PROJECT AS CONCERNS BOTH SIDES, BUT SAY THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH TO MAKE THEIR BEST EFFORTS. RUSH

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